

REMARKS

Claims 1-22 are now in the application. By this Amendment, Claims 1, 4, 5 and 17 have been amended to correct informalities Applicants discovered in the preparation of this response and not to limit the scope of these claims. No new matter has been added.

Claims 1-22 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tanaka et al. (EP 987261).

Independent Claim 1 recites, among other features, a “process further comprising carrying out the distillative separation continuously.” At least this feature cannot reasonably be considered to have been suggested by Tanaka. Tanaka suggests, at page 8, paragraph [0060], a reaction distillation method that is carried out in batch. Specifically, Tanaka suggests the reaction between a dialdehyde and a dialdehyde bisacetyl to form a dialdehyde monoacetal. After the reaction, the dialdehyde monoacetal is distilled and remaining dialdehyde bisacetyl is reacted with new dialdehyde to form dialdehyde monoacetal. This batch process cannot reasonably be considered to correspond to a distillative separation that is carried out continuously, as recited in Claim 1. As such, Tanaka suffers from the same deficiencies as the related art discussed on page 2, lines 22-26, of Applicants’ disclosure in that the mixture has to be separated and an additional process stage is required.

For the reasons set forth above, Applicants believe the pending claims are in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are respectfully requested.

In the event the Examiner believes an interview may expedite further prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

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Response to March 17, 2008 Office Action
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The Office is authorize to charge please charge our Deposit Account 03-2775 under Order 13156-00010-US1 from which the undersigned is authorized to draw for any fees that may be necessary for this application.

Dated: August 8, 2008

Respectfully submitted,

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